

IBS

Vol. 13

June 1991

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ΤΟ ΣΗΜΕΙΟΝ IN MARK 13:4

W.A. Such

## 1.1. Introduction

Exegesis of Mark 13:4 has tended to bypass το σημειον while concentrating on the double question in the parallel clauses joined by και, in particular: whether the destruction of Jerusalem alone is found or whether the *Endvollendung* appears, and on the two ταυτα words. Commentators have given it no substantial weight in the interpretation of v.4<sup>1</sup> -- perhaps because of its supposed familiarity as a well known introduction to signs phenomena.<sup>2</sup> Two fundamental senses of το σημειον need exploration: its titular sense as a heading introducing information on end-time conditions, and its linkage with v.14.

## 2.1. The Context of "Sign" in Verse 4.

The carefully constructed introduction to ch.13 (vv.1-4)<sup>3</sup>, based on a saying of Jesus in v.2, is determined by the Markan *Sitz im Leben*. The emphatic pronouncement in vv.2f. is a clue to a preoccupation of Mark: the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The saying draws attention to the temple's demise and launches a long and complicated discourse far removed it appears from the orbit of the saying's initial

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Rengstorff on το σημειον, "... the immanence of events which are then described in greater detail... In Mark... the concept and formulation reflect apocalyptic expectation" TDNT Vol 7 p.232..

<sup>2</sup> For example, Lars Hartman pointed out the paucity of references to the term, which is confined to 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and two passages in the Sibylline Oracles, and neglected it in his comments on 13:1-4, Prophecy Interpreted (Lund: Gleerup), 1966, pp. 219-222.

<sup>3</sup> K.L.Schmidt, Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu; Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur Altesten Jesusüberlieferung (Berlin), 1919 p.290.

meaning. In v.4 το σημειον is the interpretive key for unlocking the meaning of the saying in v.2.

2.1.1. Το σημειον is strategically placed in the parallel clauses joined by the conjunction in v.4. In sharp contrast to the intentionally vague double use of ταυτα, σημειον stands as the bridge between the two nondescript adjectival nouns, providing a definiteness otherwise lacking in the sentence (Pesch, "Die Frage der Jünger zielt auf ein bestimmtes Zeichen für ein bestimmtes Ereignis"<sup>4</sup>). The linking of σημειον and οταν accomplishes this by bringing a focus into an otherwise clouded exegetical conclusion due to surmizing the meaning of the twice used ταυτα in v.4. By failing to perceive the significance of σημειον for both clauses Brandenburger errs in positing a clarity only to v.4a ("ist klar und nicht umstritten" ). (Cf. Pesch, "Die Doppelfrage der Jünger lässt eine Antwort auf das "Wann " erwarten wie eine Antwort auf die Frage nach "dem Zeichen "; beide Frageformulierungen zielen auf ein "Wenn " [hotan]. Die Struktur der Rede erschliesst insofern klar den Sinn der Antwort! "<sup>6</sup>). The bridge word σημειον unites the temporal specificity demanded by the coordinate ποτε with the indirect interrogative τι which pinpoints a specific event and a particular location. The alignment of these two words and what they represent is accomplished through σημειον, which can be understood in several ways.

2.2. "It is noticeable that the disciples do not ask for a mapping out of the events of the end-time but for a single sign in their midst that God's purpose is about to be consummated." For Anderson the single sign

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<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Pesch, Naherwartungen (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag), 1968 p.101.

<sup>5</sup> Egon Brandenburger, Markus 13 und die Apokalyptik (Göttingen: Vandenhoech und Ruprecht), 1984 p.95.

<sup>6</sup> Pesch, Naherwartungen, p.106.

<sup>7</sup> H. Anderson, The Gospel According to Saint Mark

is found in v.14. Though the words "mapping out" are vague (event by event, sequentially, chronologically, a general panorama or detailed canvas?) Mark does what Anderson negates, as vv.6-8,9-13,15-27 show. The singular "sign" may refer to a particular event (v.14) without excluding a number of sayings in the chapter from being "signs" -- all existing under the rubric "sign" (v.4). In fact, a certain ambiguity about the term in v.4 permits this, which is seen in Cranfield's translation of Schrenk's article on "sign" in TWNT: "The destruction of the Temple would therefore be a "token" (Zeichen) of judgment as well as a foretoken (Vorzeichen) of the Parousia."<sup>8</sup> For E. Schweizer "sign" in the singular in 13:4 "stands in contrast to the kind of curiosity which is interested in a series of different signs." Again, although the one sign points to a unique sign (v.14), "which will serve as an indication of things which have or not happened yet" -- noticably, a series of signs is given, admittedly carefully qualified by Mark in relation to v.14 (see v.8), but given nevertheless. Cousar incidently establishes this point by saying Mark tries to delineate the end by listing in vv.7-8 elements "which could be interpreted as apocalyptic signs."<sup>10</sup> Even with the end curtailed (v.8), the events are still signs, meaning that το σημειον cannot be confined to v.14. Thus το σημειον in v.4 is a catchword in a sense for all the following sayings. Occurring at the beginning of a section full of many signs, the singular το σημειον is a unifying word interrelating all the phenomena displayed after it.

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(London: Oliphants), 1974 p.291.

<sup>8</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, "St. Mark 13," SJT 7 (1954) p.191.

<sup>9</sup> Eduard Schweizer, The Good News According to Mark (Richmond: Knox Press) 1970 p.268.

<sup>10</sup> Charles B. Cousar, "Eschatology and Mark's Theologia Crusis", Int 24 (1970) p.323. Also, Desmond Ford, The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology (University Press of America), 1979 p.69.

### 3.1. "Sign" as a Title or Heading

The term "sign," when it heads a narrative, prepares the reader to assimilate a certain kind of information different from that previously given. It unlocks a door through which the reader enters, into a room devoid of the mundane, a room of foreboding, containing warnings and "deep" things laden with meaning. The word needs no predicate or explanatory clause/s. It stands absolutely, introducing a narrative that combines notions of poetry, (in the symbolism of words), drama (in the scope and depth of its subject-matter), and perhaps theatre (in its entertainment value i.e., its ability to arrest and engage the attention of the reader). Thus the singular notion "sign," occurring at the beginning of a narrative, is a key component of an easily recognizable structure (cf. 4Ezra 5:1; 2Bar 25:1-2; SibOr 3:596) which influences the interpretation of the following details. Specifically it jolts the reader into an awareness that a bout of preliminary turmoil will soon begin which will culminate in the consummation.

Heading a narrative, "sign" conveys to the reader the notion that a special type of knowledge unattainable by unaided human reason is now introduced<sup>1</sup>. For Adela Yarbro Collins the referential aspect of language is not necessarily the primary means of communication in an apocalypse; rather commissive language is more prominent because the intent of the narrative is to evoke certain feelings and to generate a call to action<sup>2</sup>. Certainly "sign" in v.4 helps the

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<sup>1</sup> Narratives containing signs create an impact when read as a whole. John Sweet, Revelation (London: SCM Press), 1979 p.13.

<sup>2</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins, Crisis and Catharsis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), 1984 p.144. Because much of the type of material in Mk 13 (vv.7-9,12-13,14-27) is found in apocalypses (e.g. 4Ezra 5:1-13, Rev 6), Collins' comment can be applied to ch.13.

reader to evoke a certain awareness about the state of things, but more importantly it aims to alleviate concern over the confusion existing in the potential or actual calamitous situation at hand, as it would in the calamitous period immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem. The factual or informative aspect of language is a primary concern of the evangelist. Hofius correctly asserts: "The signs of the end are partly concerned with horrible and frightening portents, which indicate the last days are dawning. In so far as these portents are convulsions of a cosmic nature, they announce the transformation of the world -- the dissolution of the old creation and the reconstitution of the whole of nature."<sup>13</sup> A description of particular signs connotes a recognition in the mind of the reader that a *certain type of information* is being given, so functioning as a key word, setting the reader up to expect that what follows from the word will deal with the end-time. The placement of το σημειον in the introductory remarks leading into the main body of Mk 13 assists the reader to divide mentally what was previously read (chs. 1-12) from what follows (13:4f.). The word "*indicates*" or "*announces*" (Hofius) that something new is to be stated -- in a sense, like a title on the front cover of a book entices the reader to read on, specifically to ponder *information* on the end-time. This function appears in 4Ezra, 2Baruch, and the Sibylline Oracles e.g., 4Ezra 5:1 "Now concerning the signs: Behold, the days are coming when those who dwell on earth shall be seized with great terror, and the way of truth shall be hidden and the land shall be barren of faith."; 2Bar 25:2-3 "This then will be the sign: When horror seizes the inhabitants of the earth, and they fall into many tribulations and further, they fall into great torments."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hofius, "σημειον" in DNTT Vol 2 p.629.

<sup>14</sup> As a general heading it indicates the type of material that is to follow ie., few or many sayings on signs concerning the end-time, which are frequently connected by temporal connectives and conjunctions existing in

Thus, arriving at το σημειον in v.4, the reader is set up to receive a particular type of information. The placement of this term generates a mindset that focuses upon the end-time.

#### 4.1. The Connection between "Sign" in V.4 and V.14

In the context of ch.13 the singular σημειον in v.4 immediately spotlights an event of special import. It continues the impact of the saying in v.2 by pinpointing both the time and event, or series of events initiating the temple's destruction. Mark achieves this by shaping vv.5-13 so that το σημειον in v.4 is targeted towards what is said in v. 14 -- in particular, to the two clauses in v.14 introduced by ὅταν δε and τότε, which provide an unmistakable exactness that stems from v.4. "When" this happens "then" this is that time. Because they deal with the same subject-matter the two questions together in v.4 are connected ("The question is two-fold, (a) as to the times when (πότε) the temple is to perish, (b) as to the signal (το σημειον) for its approach")<sup>15</sup>. Mark carefully constructs the first question from the perspective of the "sign" that is to occur. The second question expands the first by rooting it in a particular event. This particularization, stated in v.14, provides a transition from v.4 to the series<sup>16</sup> of occurrences that precede the specific sign in v. 14.

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various configurations. Mk 13: 1-27 contains much of the content found in these sayings e.g., cosmic phenomena: sun/moon/stars vv.24-27, natural phenomena: earthquakes/famine v.8, depiction of particular persons/events vv.6,14,22, filial relationships: divided families/pregnant women vv. 12,17, phenomena involving political/social groups in a state of turmoil: nations/rulers etc., v.8, the time of tribulation and its characteristics: war etc., v.7,19f.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Barclay Swete, The Gospel According to Saint Mark (London: Macmillan.), 1913 p.297.

<sup>16</sup> W Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist (Nashville: Abingdon), 1969 p.162.

In ch.13 then, a particular saying in v.14 is the specific reference point for το σημειον in v.4, and all the other signs are subordinated to, and themselves point to, this specific sign as the temporal connectives πότε . . . τότε in v.14 make plain. One particular sign is το σημειον par excellence, the prime focus of attention, or specific Angelpunkt from which the various thematic signs receive their coherence.

4.2. The existence of that specific sign in a broader context of signs makes the whole narrative containing signs sayings indispensable for recognizing the intended connection of v.14 with v.4.<sup>17</sup> However, there is a sense in which the specific thing referred to in 13:14 is alone the direct fulfilment of το σημειον in v.4, something the context demonstrates because at v.14 an initial climax in the narrative is reached. Tension has been created by the specified warnings leading up to the appearance of the sign in v.14 (note vv.6,9,13). Mark builds the structure, moving from disturbances created by false prophets to the turmoil of unrestrained nations, natural calamities, persecution of the faithful, and division among families. By using temporal coordinators and conjunctions, he punctuates the narrative with appropriate brake-points to stop the flow of the narrative from accelerating from informed speculation to the rash certainty of concluding that the significant point in the end-time schema has been reached.

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<sup>17</sup> Jaques Dupont, Les Trois Apocalypses Synoptiques Marc 13; Matthieu 24-25; Luc 21 (Paris:Les Editions du Cerf), 1985. "A en juger donc par la formulation de la question du v.4 comme par la description des vv.14-20 et la declaration du v.23b, la perspective de la destruction du Temple annoncée au v.2 est spontanément située dans le contexte plus large des catastrophes qui doivent marquer la fin de ce monde." p.16.

4.2.1. However in v. 14, several pointers indicate something of great import is about to occur. The adversative δὲ and the verb ὄραν provide a contrast to what has been previously said. The nearness of the end is brought into focus with the knowledge that a particular event is about to be mentioned. The narrative builds from a description of events initially heard about (ἀκούειν v.7), to experiences of persecution (v.11), to a unique event inaugurating an especially severe unavoidable period of persecution. Lambrecht correctly shows how the narrative reaches the highpoint in v.14. "Auch aus einem Vergleich mit V.7 erhellt, wie V.14 ein *crescendo* vorliegt. Die Anzeichen dafür sind:

- "sehen" besagt mehr als nur "hören";
- der Befehl greift mehr ein als ein Verbot;
- auch ist das, was gesehen wird, erschrecken
- der als das, was geehrt wird;
- das ~~τότε~~ welches nur in V.14 steht, erhöht die Spannung."<sup>18</sup>

Conversely, Anderson fails to give v.14 its due weight by relegating vv.14-20 as only "a sign of the approaching end,"<sup>19</sup> while Cousar passes over it altogether in his comments on vv.14-20: "They simply become incidents which must take place before the parousia of the Son of Man (13:24, 'after that tribulation'). They may be labelled preliminary events, but as such they are not signs of the end itself."<sup>20</sup> The climatic point is reached in v.24 with "the one apocalyptic event which cannot be historicized..."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Jan Lambrecht, Die Redaktion der Markus-Apokalypse (Rom: Papstliches Bibelinstitut), 1967 p.148. See also Dupont, Trois pp.17-18, Brandenburger, Markus p.133, Zenji Kato, Die Völkermission in Markusevangelium (New York: Peter Lang), 1986 p.140, Ford, Abomination p.145.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, Mark p.295.

<sup>20</sup> Cousar, Int p.324.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid..

Certainly the narrative from v.14 continues to build, creating a further tension which is only resolved in v.24, but the *crescendo* reached in v.14 is important precisely because it is the outstanding event which indicates the nearness of the horizon of the parousia of the Son of Man -- and so it functions as a sign *without* precedence.<sup>22</sup> The definite article το in v.14 makes this apparent.<sup>23</sup> Also, the reader is urged to "see" i.e., not only to look for a single specific event, but to *understand*<sup>24</sup> its significance in relationship to the end-time. In contrast to the notion of distance implied in "hearing" about wars and rumours of wars, the repetition of the temporal marker ὅταν (v.7) in v.14, this time with ἵδῃτε, conveys a *notion of something near, definite, and observable*. The verb ὄραν occurs in 9:4,13:26, 14:62,16:7 in conjunction with weighty revelatory events perceived by the elect. In v.14 it targets a momentous end-time event which Jesus' disciples must heed. "Seeing" is further defined by the parenthesis ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω which interrupts the flow of the protasis apodesis construction; the two verbs ἵδαιν and νοεῖν signify a cognizance going beyond simple observation, denoting a *marking of what is seen*,<sup>25</sup> that is, a *realisation of its import*. In 7:18 and 8:17

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<sup>22</sup> Ford, Abomination, p.146.

<sup>23</sup> Pesch, "Das wird dadurch angezeigt, dass gegenüber V.7 (πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων) das Objekt in V.14 durch den Artikel determiniert ist: τὸ Βδὲλυγμα. Dies Feststellung wird nicht durch die andere entkräftet, dass der Artikel nach Dan 12,11 mit zu einem Zitat gehört. Durch den Artikel erhält die Wendung eine eigenartige Bestimmtheit, welche durch die nachfolgende Genitivergänzung της ἐρμώσεως noch unterstrichen wird." Naherwartungen p.139.

<sup>24</sup> Werner Kelber, The Kingdom in Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress), 1974. p.120.

<sup>25</sup> David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (University of London: Athlone Press), 1956 p.423.

voέν appears in the sense of a penetrating understanding, that is, a weighing up and a gaining of insight beyond the level of appearances. Such is the meaning here. In contrast to events in vv.5-13, which by the qualification in v.8 Mark has pointedly held back from correlating with the end-time, *no such caveat is supplied at v.14 and at this point the reader must exercise insight.*

Thus v.14 is a climactic point in the narrative developed from v.5. A crescendo is reached as the previous temporal markers (vv.7,11,) binding the text together receive a relief of tension in the ὅταν δέ ἴδῃτε/τότε clauses. The adversative force of δέ is prominent as the temporal coordinator τότε v.14b brings to a halt the unfolding structure of events. Translating the particle as an adversative anticipates the force of τότε. However, ironically an anomaly is created through the juxtaposition of definiteness, implied by the temporal markers, and the ambiguously couched description that follows, that is, τὸ βδέλυγμα της ἐρημώσεως, which is found in LXX Dan 9:27,11:31,12:11 and there alludes to the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. For Mark, a similar but worse situation than that described in Daniel is about to develop -- one triggering events of the end-time (13:15,19-20. Note 13:4 συντελεισθαι, and v.24 -- the abomination of desolation brings about the end-time timetable cf. Dan 12:11).

4.3. Mark gives his own clues regarding the nature and significance of this manifestation of evil in v.14. The grammatical abnormality between the neuter τὸ βδέλυγμ and the masculine participle ἐστηκότα is hardly coincidental<sup>26</sup> -- such appalling desolation is understood by Mark "in terms of a personal power."<sup>27</sup> The

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<sup>26</sup> Marxsen, Evangelist p.181.

<sup>27</sup> Kelber, Kingdom p.119. Beda Rigaux, L'Antéchrist et l'Opposition au Royaume Messianique dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament (Paris: Gabalda et fils), 1932 p.245.

participle denotes certainty of existence (lit. "standing") as well as an arrogant existence contravening all things holy, a standing in the sanctuary (ὅπου οὐ δει). The preposition ὅπου leaves unsaid where he is standing, but according to indications in Daniel and historical reconstruction from that text, the place is the temple. In other words, the temple has been profaned by an individual, whose standing is an act of desecration, polluting the holy place and causing the removal of the Holy presence. As the intervening verses from v.2 through v.13 make no mention of the temple, we conclude that the question in v.4b, and especially the nature of το σημεῖον -- is answered in v.14.<sup>28</sup>

4.3.1. Of the interpretations that attempt to identify who or what the abomination of desolation is<sup>29</sup>, the one

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<sup>28</sup> Marxsen, Evangelist "Verse 4 contained the question as to the time of the temple's destruction predicted in vs.2. But only in vs.14 is the temple spoken of; that is, this verse must somehow be an answer to the question." p.180. Cf. Ford, ". . . v.14 is indeed the answer to the specific request of the disciples for a sign of the coming destruction of the temple and the end of the age. . . ." Abomination p.145. He comments on the specificity of the sign in the context of ch.13. "It is clear that the mysterious βδέλμυγμα της ἐρημώσεως must be something very specific, for it constitutes a signal, and a signal of no mean importance." Therefore v.14 stands alone among the previous verses because of its significance for the disciples. Thus from the genuine saying in v.2 Mark has weaved a narrative that in particular draws attention to the significance of the Danielic τὸ βδέλμυγμα της ἐρημώσεως for his community.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.160-175, and George Raymond Beasley-Murray, A Commentary on Mark 13 (London: Macmillan.) 1957 pp.50-72.

most applicable to Mark's situation is that dealing with the circumstances surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under the leadership of Titus. The disciples asked for *one particular sign* signalling the end of the temple (v.4). That sign is given in v.14. On the historical plain Vespasian's son Titus was the only individual accomplishing that destruction: whoever or whatever else the mysterious τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως points to, it must include his pollution of the temple and pillage of the city<sup>30</sup>. The purposely

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<sup>30</sup> Contra Gerd Theissen, whose position is weakened by associating Greuel der Verwüstung primarily with Vespasian in a sense *in absentia*. Theissen marshals an array of prophecies from Josephus (Wars 3:8.9, 6:5.3; Tacitus Hist 2:78; 5:13.2; Suetonius Vesp 5,7; De Cass. 65:1.4), to the effect that the long expected Weltherrschaft from the East was understood by Christians in Palestine/Syria to be not Titus but Vespasian, whose elevation to Emperor, desecration of the Temple and destruction of Jerusalem could only mean for Mark the Anfang der Wehen (ibid., p.272, p.284). Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien NT et Orbis Antiquus 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht), 1989 p.271. And contra Hengel who balks at Titus being associated with the one "standing" because, "the masculine perfect participle ἐστηκότα with its unusual construction *ad sensum*, points more to the beginning of a permanent state of affairs associated with a specific person. By contrast, Titus left the burnt-out sanctuary, which later served as a camp for prisoners, and indeed Jerusalem, soon after the final victory." Studies p.18. This objection assumes that for Titus to be the one *standing* he has to remain in Jerusalem, and as the Antichrist (p.19), direct his reign of terror from there. But Titus' *standing* indicates his act of desolation and authority. Christians would not have discounted Titus being the abominable one in view of what he had accomplished in Jerusalem, his barbarous exploits in the months following the sack of the city, and his triumphant return to Rome. Titus was evil personified and his power to inflict terror throughout

vague reference to Titus, coupled with the proceeding context from v.14, has inclined Cranfield and Wenham among others to see in v.14 a further figure whose appearance and evil exploits surpass even those of the Roman commander<sup>31</sup>. Thus Titus is a harbinger of one who is to come, the Antichrist. The destruction of the city under the Roman military leader forewarns of a coming crisis that will envelop the entire earth and be unprecedented in the annals of suffering and warfare among mankind. According to this view, Kelber's attempt to capture the magnitude of the events surrounding the destruction of the city and to connect the abomination of desolation with Titus fails, because it limits the extremity of what is portrayed in vv.19ff<sup>32</sup>. Mark underdepicts the horrors of the devastation of the city by Titus (cf. Jos. Wars 5:10.12.13; 6:1.3.9), though he hints at them by the injunctions to flee and the warnings of the ensuing turmoil (vv.14-16,17-18); but these are only the preliminaries in terms of the suffering and devastation that is to come. Though underplaying the horrors of the destruction of the city, Mark leaves to the imagination what the horrors of the end-time proper will be like. Only the Antichrist can cause devastation on such a global scale. The unholy devastation that has desecrated Jerusalem will soon engulf the entire world.

However, against this view, nowhere is the Antichrist phenomenon clearly described in the New Testament; rather isolated pieces of information from various texts are drawn together, surmised to be referring to one individual, and combined with various strands of information in post-New Testament literature,

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the world would increase through his influence in Rome. After all, his father was ruler of the civilised world, and he was next in line. For Christians Titus' exploits in Palestine/Syria were a foretaste of what was to come.

<sup>31</sup> Cranfield, SJT p.300. David Wenham, "Recent Study of Mark 13: Part 1" TSF Bulletin 71 1978 p.8.

<sup>32</sup> Kelber, Kingdom p.119.

produce this awesome figure "Antichrist", who has supernatural power and challenges the dominion of God (e.g. cf., Did 16 "Then the Deceiver of the World will show himself, pretending to be a Son of God and doing signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will work such wickedness as there has never been since the beginning." cf. ApEl 3:5-9). The maze of Jewish and Christian traditions documented by Bousset, and the fragmentary material in the New Testament, make it questionable whether Mark is referring to such a individual in 13:14.<sup>33</sup> Rather he leaves it open-ended: whatever the form evil takes in the end-time *it begins with the trigger event mentioned in v.14 which will lead to a situation unparalleled in severity in the history of mankind.*

4.4. Summing up: the enigmatic phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα της ἐρημώσεως in v.14 is the hinge on which the discourse turns. Verses 5-13 build to v.14, at and from which point the narrative abruptly changes. Instead of a delineation of future events the narrative is

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<sup>33</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, The Anti-Christ Legend (trans.) A.H. Keane, (London: Hutchinson and Co.), 1896. Beda Rigaux, L'Antechrist. Grundmann's comments show the difficulties in the use of this term. "The term ἀντιχριστός occurs in the NT only in John's Epistles and is very rare in the first teachers of the early Church. The author of 1Jn can speak of the awareness of the community that antichrist will come 2:18;4:3. Antichrist is here a coming apocalyptic figure. The figure is connected with the opponent of God in Jewish Apocalyptic, which for its part is found elsewhere in the history of religion. The opponent of God increases his power and dominion on earth just before the apocalyptic end; he is then judged and destroyed. In primitive Christian apocalyptic, confession of Jesus as the Messiah gives antichrist the features of a counter-christ (cf. Rev.13 etc.; 2Th. 2:3-10; Mk 13:14-27), though the term ἀντιχριστός is not used until we come to John's epistles." TDNT Vol 9 p.571.

suddenly punctuated with an injunction for the reader to recognize the import of one particular event and to act immediately upon it. The two temporal markers ὅταν and τότε form a parallelism introducing that event and proscribing a course of action. The influence of the co-ordinator τότε stretches through all the events up to v.24, where the prepositional phrase μετὰ τὴν θλιψιν ushers in a further dimension of the end-time schema. Thus two trajectories appear up to v.24: the series of events culminating in the awful sacrilege of v.14a, and the consequences of that event from v.14c. Verse 14 functions in connection with "sign" in v.4 by assisting the reader to recognize that the destruction of the city by Titus is the key that inaugurates the beginning of the end-time proper. Thus this event heralds the imminent arrival of the great onslaught of the dark forces of evil. In vv.5-13 Mark attempts to show that the initial period of turmoil in the existence of the church i.e., the recent past of Mark's time of writing, is only preliminary to the end-time proper. With the coming of Titus a linkage occurs with the advent of the consummation. Readiness is the appropriate response.

#### 5.1. The Dual Significance of the Sign in V.14

It is noticeable that following the introduction of τὸ βδέλυγμα της ἐρημώσεως the tenor of the narrative becomes more ominous than in the previous section vv.5-13; not just in terms of the immediacy of what is signified in v.14, and by Mark's "holding back" of the end-time (vv.7,8), but by the change of tone in vv.14f. The rumours of wars that do not essentially affect the disciples give place to the direct injunction to flee and the dire warnings of consequences for those caught unawares. Similarly, the heightened tone of the extent of the end-time horrors in vv.19f. indicates that between vv.5-13 and 14-23 a great transition occurs in the focus of the narrative.

5.1.1. The difficulty in unravelling the significance of v.14 for vv.5-13,15-23 is compounded by the placement of the sayings on signs in the chapter, which follow a loose chronological sequence. This sequence when rigidly adhered step-by-step causes problems in

interpretation. For example, Bo Reicke dismisses an identification of the figure in v.14 "with the occupation and destruction of the Temple by Titus in A.D. 70," because "this military event signalled the final act of the war and did not imply any further persecution"<sup>34</sup>. The flight of believers from the city occurred before the war. Thus Mark's outline of events is at variance "from what is known about the war". Some of the difficulties that surface when taking vv.14f. in a literal chronological sense are: the contrast in vv.9-13, which deals with the persecution Christians will face, and the horrors mentioned in vv.14-23, which seem much more severe than those in vv.9-13. In the latter verses the impression is of the first serious outbreak of intense opposition. The necessity of flight from the city in such haste is hardly compatible with the 18 months siege of the city by the Romans, whereby in the latter stages of the assault, flight was impossible. If the phrase in v.19 ἔσονται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκείναι is allied with v.14 as the time the abomination takes place, then the tribulation of v.19f. does not involve Christians who have already abandoned the city. Yet v.20 mentions the shortening of days due to the severity of the persecution on the elect or Church. Christians appear to be escaping and being persecuted in the same tribulation. Similarly the severity of the θλίψις in v.19 is incompatible with the circumstances surrounding the destruction of the city<sup>35</sup>. The arena of one persecution involves the destruction of the city (v.14, cf. vv.2,4), while the arena of the other covers the entire earth (vv.20,27). Why should the days be

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<sup>34</sup> Bo Reicke, "Synoptic Prophecies of the Destruction of Jerusalem," Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature (ed. David Aune) (Leiden: E.J. Brill), 1972 pp.125-6.

<sup>35</sup> V. Taylor "This assertion is much too emphatic for a siege; it is clear that the thought of v.19 is eschatological." The Gospel According to Saint Mark (London: Macmillan), 1963 p.514.

shortened if the elect are safe (cf. vv. 14b-f.) -- which also contradicts v. 20? Far from fleeing to safety, the elect are caught up in the struggle, facing persecution and the possibility of being lead astray by false prophets (vv. 21-22). Anderson<sup>36</sup> inadvertently highlights the problem: "Verse 19 is an almost exact replica of the great tribulation prophesied in Dan 12:1 (cf. Jer 30:7; Rev 7:14), and has the effect of enlarging the relatively restricted Judean crisis portrayed in verses 14-18 into a great act in the apocalyptic drama of the end-time". This disharmony in the narrative is an indication of the situation Mark is grappling with in ch. 13.

Could not these difficulties stem from Mark trying to hold together two related events -- the destruction of the city as a *fait accompli* and the anticipation of a period of an onslaught of evil heralding the end-time woes proper. *The crucial verse for this interpretation is v. 14.* Not only does Mark build the tension from v. 2 up to v. 14, but in v. 14 ("the hinge upon which the sayings of chap. 13 turn")<sup>37</sup> he "enters" the text itself and interposes with a statement of such import that its significance needs to be brought before the reader. The obtrusive manner Mark does this shows that the thread of the argument previously constructed lacks pointedness in communication. What it has to say is so weighty that the omniscient narrator no longer remains the impersonal scribe, but "loses" his objectivity and "intrudes" into the text. This device stops the reader and compels him to abandon the passivity of receptor and mimic the narrator, that is, as the narrator could not remain the impassive describer of events but was constrained to enter the text, so the reader must abandon the relative passivity of reading and take special cognizance about what is said in v. 14. In the after-math of the destruction of the city Mark wisely

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<sup>36</sup> Anderson, Mark p. 296.

<sup>37</sup> Marxsen, Evangelist p. 183

avoids any direct reference to the Emperor's son<sup>38</sup>, instead he gives "a dark hint" (V.Taylor) and leaves the reader to make the necessary connection based upon the perception that an individual in the tradition of Antiochus Epiphanes has invaded the inner sanctuary of the temple in Jerusalem.

Furthermore, we know that historically this act of desolation by Titus already had a recent precedent in the failed attempt by Caligula to erect a statue of himself in the temple in C.E. 39-40. Now though, the act of desecration *had* occurred and such an abomination could signify only one thing -- the Messianic Woes were about to begin. "Thus years before the Gospel of Mark was written, the Antichrist concept was a familiar one to the Christian church. Caligula's threat had added fuel to the eschatological fire. It is probably impossible now for us to conjure up in imagination the intensity of excitement which must have prevailed in Jewish and Christian communities as the word spread of the mad Emperor's intended blasphemy. The coming event would inevitably have been interpreted as a sign of the end."<sup>39</sup> Though we dispute that the concept of Antichrist had the universal recognition in the church, the valid point by Ford is that if Caligula's failed attempt to desecrate the temple encountered such trenchant opposition, which known from the book of Daniel would have been interpreted as a possible sign of the nearness of the end, *then how much more would the actual destruction of the temple and city by Titus convince many that this time the end really was at hand.* Thus Mark's pointed reference in v.14 is to stir the reader into apprehending the gravity of what has recently happened. By using the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως Mark connected the events perpetrated in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. with the blasphemy of Antiochus Epiphanes mentioned in Daniel, thereby establishing from sacred scripture the advent of the beginning of

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<sup>38</sup> S.G.F. Brandon, "The Date of Mark's Gospel" NTS 7 (1960-61), p.134.

<sup>39</sup> Ford, Abomination pp.162-3.

the end-time -- ". . . in Dan 12:11 the setting up of the abomination of desolation marks the beginning of the count-down to the End."<sup>40</sup> The sign in v.14, for those who are prepared to understand the "deep" things of God, is the harbinger of the appearance of the full onslaught of supernatural evil that is about to be unleashed on the world.<sup>41</sup>

5.2. Thus in Mk 13 a much wider meaning of "sign" is indicated than simply confining the word to designate the one specific sign (as in associating it

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<sup>40</sup> M. Hooker, "Trails and Tribulations in Mk 13," BJRL 65 (1982-83) p.90.

<sup>41</sup> Contra Timothy Gedderd, whose view on the secrecy of the kingdom in the gospel is incompatible with Mark communicating any historical event that would enable readers "to chart out an eschatological time-table" (p.203). See ch.8, Watchwords: Mark 13 in the Context of Markan Eschatology JSNT Suppl Ser 26 (Sheffield: JSOT Press), 1989. If the disciples were "thinking" without faith (13:1-4a) it seems strange that Jesus goes ahead and gives an outline of the end-time situation along with a demand for vigilance instead of correcting the disciples by eschewing all end-time information on particular crises (which would be expected according to Gedderd's view). Jesus corrects apocalyptic speculation (v.7f.) by incorporating it into an end-time schema and not by abandoning all schemas. No indication is apparent in vv.2-4 or 5f. that the disciples' question was essentially "misguided" (p.224). Also, Gedderd fails to make sense of the way Mark uses events like wars, famines, earthquakes etc. as signs heralding the demise of Jerusalem. In our view, only the one event mentioned in v.14 can be pinpointed to an exact situation and it is this event which clues the believer into realizing that the Messianic Woes are beginning. Vigilance in discipleship is hardly made unnecessary by revelation of the significance of this event but, in view of the times, is encouraged.

in v.4 with v.14). As well as indicating the ruination of the city by Titus, in a titular sense the word "sign" encompasses the entire narrative to v.26 by heading an outline of events that will culminate in the appearance of the Son of Man at the consummation. This dual understanding of "sign" in v.4 solves the quandary in ascertaining the meaning of the double question in v.4. Gaston appraises rightly: "It is assumed by the disciples, according to Mark, that the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world are related, even simultaneous events."<sup>42</sup> So, as well as having a fulfilment in the destruction of the temple (v.14), the ταῦτα πάντα in v.4, "points forward to the eschaton."<sup>43</sup> The double question has a double reference -- the first question to the destruction of the temple in v.14, and the second to the consummation. Thus, "Die beiden Fragen, . . . sind keine Umschreibungen ein und derselben Frage, sondern unterscheiden sich."<sup>44</sup> Brandenburger is correct: the second question is the decisive question.<sup>45</sup> Admittedly, the fact that prophecies dealing with the destruction of the temple and the consummation "are mixed up in a strange fashion"<sup>46</sup> and this seems incongruous, but the evidence points to the intertwining of subject matter; because if the material in v.4 is confined to the destruction of Jerusalem alone, the significance of much of the language in vv.7-8,19-22,24-27 is minimized.

## 6.1. Conclusion

From the catastrophe of 70 C.E. Mark has selected a highly emotive purposely enigmatic phrase to depict the significance of the destruction of the

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<sup>42</sup> Lloyd Gaston, No Stone on Another Suppl NT 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill), 1970 p.12.

<sup>43</sup> Kelber, Kingdom p.113.

<sup>44</sup> Kato, Völkmission p.136.

<sup>45</sup> Brandenburger, Markus p.97.

<sup>46</sup> Eduard Lohse, Mark's Witness to Jesus Christ (London: Lutterworth Press), 1955 p.75.

temple and city of Jerusalem, and around it has constructed a complex narrative based upon a saying of Jesus in v.2 connecting the destruction with the time of Jesus. This saying is the "peg" from which the narrative hangs. Mark has successfully weaved together signs sayings that exist simultaneously in relatively separate contexts in ch.13 -- the carefully shaped question in v. 4 means that an understanding of the function of signs in the chapter is complicated by the recognition that two events are portrayed: the destruction of Jerusalem and the consummation. He achieved this by superimposing two elements together (the two elements are narratives complete with signs on the destruction of Jerusalem and on the consummation). In a sense, he placed the narratives on top of each other; by making signs *precede* the destruction of Jerusalem he intimated that the city was connected with the end-time, and then by reinterpreting the abomination of desolation in Daniel so as to refer to Titus' desolation of the city, he made the destruction of Jerusalem a sign of the consummation. At the heart of this construction is v.14 which unites both elements. Thus we can understand how v.14 is the real fulfilment of το σημειον in v.4, and yet, at the same time, see how that term functions as a general heading that introduces all the signs on both the destruction of the city and the consummation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy there are phrases which are used to describe a god, foreign nation, or land by indicating whether or not it was "known" to the Israelites, their fathers, or children. For instance, one of the punishments threatened upon a disobedient Israelite community was oppression at the hands of a nation "which you have not known" (28:33). In similar fashion the Israelites were warned against following after gods which "neither you nor your fathers have known" (13:7; 28:64). In these instances, this lack of knowledge was a desirable quality. That is, it was good that the fathers did not know "x" and based upon this precedent the present generation was encouraged not to know "x" either. This pattern is followed throughout Deuteronomy and Jeremiah with only two remarkable exceptions.<sup>2</sup> In Deut 8:3,16 "manna" is

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<sup>1</sup> This paper represents a major revision of a paper read by the author at the meeting of the Midwest Association of the Society of Biblical Literature on February 19, 1990 entitled, "What Did the Fathers Know? A Discussion of Deut 8:3, 16" and appearing in Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies (forthcoming). In that paper I investigated cross cultural parallels to the manna tradition found in Deuteronomy 8 and concluded the links dubious at best.

<sup>2</sup> The book of Jeremiah also attests to this devise. For discussions relating the prophecy of Jeremiah and the book of deuteronomy see H. H. Rowley, "The Prophet Jeremiah and the Book of Deuteronomy," in Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to T. H. Robinson, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1950)

described as something which neither the present generation nor the generations of the fathers had known, and for that reason the memory of the manna was to be maintained. This essay will investigate the function of "knowledge" in its association with the manna tradition found in Deut 8:3,16. In so doing, I will examine the use of מן as a chronological divider in the construction of the meaningful temporal organization of experience.

## "MANNA"

A folk etymology of the word "manna" is presented in Exod 16:15.<sup>3</sup> Here the fathers are depicted as ignorant of the phenomenon. The name "manna" is said to have originated from the question which was posed by the marveling Israelites: "What is it?" The Exodus passage introduces the point made in Deuteronomy. The fathers had no prior knowledge of the manna. Gerhard von Rad suggested that the Exodus 16 passage is foundational to the Deuteronomy passage in placing the manna episode within the context of God's provision for the covenant community while in the wilderness.<sup>4</sup>

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157-174. Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> The tradition is also recorded in Exod 16:1-36; Num 11:6-9; 21:5; Josh 5:12; Ps 78:23-25; 105:40; Neh 9:15,20.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhard von Rad, Deuteronomy, a Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966) 73. Von Rad's observation calls into question the working hypothesis of Bodenheimer in which he states that only regard of manna as a "natural phenomenon...permits analysis and discussion." F. S. Bodenheimer, "The Manna of Sinai," Biblical Archaeologist Reader, ed. David Noel Freedman and G. Ernest Wright vol. 1 (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961) 76. The question here being addressed is not so much the essence of the object, but rather the subject's mode of being in which manna becomes a part.

Twice the book of Deuteronomy tells of provision while in the wilderness with the expected result that the Israelite community should know something. Deut 29:5 states that God supplied manna while the Israelites were in the wilderness so they might know that the Lord is God. Likewise, Deut 8:3 indicates that the lesson taught to the Israelites by means of the manna was that man does not live by bread alone but by "everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God." The concept of "manna", as introduced by Exodus and extended by Deuteronomy, is couched within the context of Israel's developing intellectual and spiritual traditions.

### "TO KNOW"

"Knowledge" in the book of Deuteronomy takes on a special historical significance in that many of the objects of knowledge become part of the traditions of the community which are to be preserved and passed on from one generation to another. For instance, Deut 11:2 points out that the children of the present generation do not know the plagues which the Egyptians suffered and so they must be instructed in the demonstration of the mighty deliverance provided by God. Similarly, Deut 31:13 indicates that the children do not know the law and in order to correct this situation the Israelites are to read the law and place it prominently within the community life. In these two instances "knowledge" refers to the preservation of the community traditions.

Conversely, through use of the verb יָדַע, Deuteronomy can bring to mind a kind of "knowledge" which refers to items that are foreign to the Israelite community and are to remain outside the communal traditions. Three times (13:3,14; 11:28) the text indicates that there are "gods which you [the present generation] have not known." The absence of previous knowledge is cited as a precedent against seeking present knowledge of strange deities. In one instance, Deut 28:33, a threatened punishment is described as oppression by a "nation which you have not known." The

punishment assumes a terrifying quality due to the introduction of an unknown element. In the literature, the traditions of the community were intentionally distinguished from foreign traditions. One of the ways in which this bifurcation was accomplished was through the use of the verb יָדַע to discriminate between those traditions which were sanctioned by the community and those which were not.

There are several references in Deuteronomy which mention the combined knowledge of both the fathers and the present generation as a part of the description of other gods or nations. Deut 13:7; 28:36,64 refer to foreign gods and nations which stood outside the knowledge of the fathers or the present generation. In all of these the phraseology is the same - אֹתָם וְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יָדַעְתִּי. The verb, "to know" is formed according to the second person singular masculine pronoun with "you" referring to the present audience, and the substantive, "your fathers", is added in apposition with the weight of emphasis probably residing with the first subject, "you." In all of these passages it is good that the fathers did not know the object and the present generation is expected to maintain that lack of familiarity.

Deuteronomy 8, however, is different. In both instances where the knowledge of the fathers is mentioned it is in reference to "manna." In verse 3 the substantive "your fathers" does not appear in apposition to "you" but is found in an independent clause. Here, the knowledge of "the fathers" is contrasted with that of the present generation. In verse 16 "the fathers" stands alone with no mention of the present generation. The grammatical structure of these verses alone arouses interest. The third plural perfect, used in these verses, has the nun termination only here and in Isa 26:16.<sup>5</sup> J. Hoftijer has concluded

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<sup>5</sup> As pointed out by Gesenius, this termination may be simply to avoid a hiatus with the following נָ (¶441). The Isaiah passage is suspect textually. It should be

a "contrastive" function of this termination when appended to imperfect forms.<sup>6</sup> A similar intent occurs here with the perfect forms in Deut 8:3,16. The present knowledge of manna is contrasted to a previous lack of knowledge. The grammatical form of this passage should not be discounted, for as Raymond van Leeuwen has pointed out, this chapter is constructed purposefully to form a series of tight literary patterns.<sup>7</sup> In addition, van Leeuwen has also demonstrated that a series of puns has been incorporated which tie together

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pointed out that the Samaritan Pentateuch lacks the nun termination in both vs. 3 and 16 thereby discounting the explanation offered by Gesenius. Otherwise the SP and the MT of verse 3 correspond exactly. Verse 16, however, adds a copulative ׀ after the reference to the "fathers" in the SP besides the full spelling of נִסוּחַךְ and הַמֵּאכִילֶךָ. A case may be made for considering the phrase "וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ" of verse 3 and the phrase "אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּן" of verse 16 as editorial remarks intended to enhance the remarkable nature of the manna.

<sup>6</sup> J. Hoftijer, The Function and Use of the Imperfect Forms With Nun Paragogicum in Classical Hebrew (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985) 34-38. Hoftijer mentions this passage but does not offer a grammatical discussion. J. Hoftijer, The Function and Use, 125 n.391. Contrast does seem to be the intent in the references to the knowledge of "you" and "your fathers."

<sup>7</sup> Raymond van Leeuwen, "What Comes Out of God's Mouth: Theological Wordplay in Deuteronomy 8," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 47 (1985) 55-57. See also N. Lofink, Das Hauptgebot eine Untersuchung literarischer Einteilungsfragen zu Dtn 5-11, (Analecta Biblica 20; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963) 195. R. J. Clifford, Deuteronomy, (Old Testament Message 4; Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1982) 55. R. Van Leeuwen, "On the Structure and Sense of Deuteronomy 8," Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies, 4 (1984): 237-249.

verses 3 and 16.<sup>8</sup> This means that the grammatical structure of the passage is quite intentional and that the peculiarities of the structure merit close investigation. Further, this is the only time in all of Deuteronomy or Jeremiah that the lack of knowledge on the part of the fathers<sup>9</sup> is seen as a virtuous quality in the object described.

There are two ways in which the phrase "your fathers had not known" may be understood. First, the phrase could be taken to mean that nothing of this sort has ever existed before. "X," the object of knowledge, is new, and for that reason the fathers had not known it. Here, the emphasis is upon the newness of the object. Secondly, the phrase could be understood to mean that this sort of thing has existed in the past but for some reason or other was foreign to the experience of the fathers. Here, there is a tacit acknowledgement of the prior existence of the object. "X" had simply never been part of the experience of the community. The emphasis, in this way of understanding, is not so much that the object had changed but that something had happened with the knowing subject. In other words, something new was happening in the experience of the community.

In surveying the other instances in which this phrase is used to refer either to the knowledge of the fathers or the knowledge of the present generation, it becomes apparent that the second of the above alternatives is the correct way to understand the phrase. When the nation was warned against following gods which the fathers had not known, the warning did not constitute a denial of the existence of those gods as objects of worship, rather it was a statement which denied that these gods had been objects of worship within the Israelite community. Likewise, a warning which threatened punishment in the form of oppression

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<sup>8</sup> Van Leeuwen, "What Comes Out of God's Mouth," 57.

<sup>9</sup> The phrase occurs in Jer 9:16; 19:4.

by a nation which the fathers had not known was not a denial of the prior existence of that nation, but was simply an affirmation that the fathers had not been oppressed by those people. The manna experience, food supplied miraculously by God, was new to the communal experience of the Israelite nation and in chapter 8 of Deuteronomy is utilized to evidence the fidelity of God to his people.

#### THE INTERSECTION OF THE MANNA TRADITION AND KNOWLEDGE FORMULA

There have been several commentators who have addressed the phrases under question. Moshe Weinfeld states of 8:3 that the reference to the knowledge of the fathers is to "stress whatever was exceptional in the event."<sup>10</sup> The phrase was part of the author's rhetorical technique, "designed to impress upon his listeners the greatness of the manna miracle."<sup>11</sup> Weinfeld's comments, however, do not adequately explain the function of the phrase "which your fathers did not know," nor its association with the manna. There are a host of other exceptional events described in Deuteronomy which do not share this particular description. Neither the Israelites, nor their fathers had ever crossed the Reed Sea. They had never known battle with the Amalekites, nor had they ever quenched their thirst by drinking water which flowed freely out of a rock. These are all exceptional events which are mentioned in the book and are without the benefit of the notation regarding the knowledge of the Israelites or their fathers. It may be that the emphasis intended by the phrase is other than simply noting the remarkable nature of the event.

S. R. Driver points out that the manna account in Deuteronomy 8 is placed within a parenetic sermon. The

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<sup>10</sup> Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School, 172.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

manna," 1) taught Israel its dependence upon Jehovah, and 2) operated as a test of Israel's disposition."<sup>12</sup> This certainly seems to be the function of the manna account in Deuteronomy 8, but Driver's statements fail to explain the contribution made by the material which refers to the ignorance of the fathers. Driver's explanation would not be affected if the reference to "the fathers" was removed from the text. Sensitive to this defect Driver continues, "It was food unknown before (Ex 16:15); and consequently a signal evidence of God's sustaining providence."<sup>13</sup> Once again, however, Driver's comments do not explain the novel idea introduced by the reference to the fathers. Surely, as evidence of God's sustaining ability, it would have been enough for the present generation to have been unaware of the bread from heaven. Given Driver's explanation, the reference to the fathers is unnecessary. Further, the grammatical peculiarities of verses 3 and 16 elude explanation by Driver. Mention of "the fathers" within Deuteronomy 8 suggests that there was a specific intent in mind which could only be satisfied by a reference to the "fathers."

Von Rad adds an insight which may aid in the discussion. In comparison to the account of the manna in Exodus 16, he says of the Deuteronomy 8 passage that in "Dt 8, 3, the matter is completely spiritualized. It is stated expressly that the event was intended to teach that man does not live by bread alone... Here manna is taken as spiritual food."<sup>14</sup> In his opinion, the Deuteronomy 8 passage is an interpretation of the Exodus account stressing the theological implications

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<sup>12</sup> S. R. Driver, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy (ICC; Edinburgh: Scribner's, 1902) 106-107.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>14</sup> G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, trans. D. M. G. Stalker 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 1:282.

of provision from the mouth of God.<sup>15</sup> While, as pointed out by Van Leeuwen,<sup>16</sup> von Rad may be in error concerning his suggestion of an opposition between the spiritual and the material, von Rad's insight leads us to suspect that the reference to the fathers is intended to communicate a quality of spiritual intimacy granted to the present generation which was withheld from those of earlier generations. The provision of manna served as visible evidence of this privileged relationship. The same view is expounded more fully by Bruce Malina, who observes both halakic and haggadic amplifications of the basic<sup>17</sup> manna tradition throughout the Old Testament. Remnants of this development may be seen in the Psalms where the "manna" is referred to as "grain of heaven" (78:24) and "לחם אֲבִירִים" (78:25).<sup>18</sup> The Psalmic literature seems to emphasize that the important thing to remember about the manna is that it was "bread from heaven" which rained down from the "doors of heaven" (105:40; 78:23). The manna motif, placed within the didactic context of Deuteronomy 8, is to be remembered as part of the religious heritage of the community.

To this point, several observations may be offered. 1) The grammatical and rhetorical structure of

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<sup>15</sup> Von Rad, Deuteronomy, 73.

<sup>16</sup> R. Van Leeuwen, "On the Structure and Sense of Dt 8," 237.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Malina, The Palestinian Manna Tradition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968) 39-40.

<sup>18</sup> The phrase in Ps 78:25 is fraught with difficulties. It may mean "bread of the heavenly beings," i.e. "bread of angels" or it may mean "bread of the Mighty," i.e. "bread of the gods." A helpful introduction to the problems involved may be found in A. Kapelrud, "אֲבִיר," Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed: G. J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John Willis vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974) 42-44.

Deut 8:3,16 argues for an intentional and specific contribution by the phrase "which your fathers did not know." That contribution is not sufficiently characterized by calling it "emphatic." 2) The reference to the father's ignorance of the "manna" does not mean that they had no previous awareness of divinely supplied nourishment, just that they had never experienced it. 3) The reference to "manna" in Deut 8:3,16 functions as evidence of God's fidelity to his people.

#### THE REFERENCE TO THE FATHERS AS A CHRONOLOGICAL DIVIDER

In a variety of ways the Biblical literature refers to the God of Israel as "the God of my father."<sup>19</sup> J. Phillip Hyatt has argued for a theory of religious origins based in part upon the prominence of the nomenclature "the God of my father." Whether or not one accepts Hyatt's theory, he does illustrate, without question, the importance of historical continuity within Israelite religion. When this preferred continuity is kept in mind, the present contrast to the knowledge of the fathers looms in bold relief.<sup>20</sup> This observation is all the more striking given the more general tendency found in the book of Deuteronomy regarding the function of remembrance within the community. Edward Blair thinks it not too extreme to state that, "the memory motif, so strong in Deuteronomy, is one of the primary emphases of the Bible as a whole."<sup>21</sup> The introduction of anything new,

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<sup>19</sup> J. Philip Hyatt, "Yahweh as 'The God of my Father'," Vetus Testamentum 5 (1955) 130-136.

<sup>20</sup> David Noel Freedman has also alluded to the important role of continuity in the religion of Israel. David Noel Freedman, "Who is Like Thee Among the Gods? The Religion of Early Israel," Ancient Israelite Religion, ed. Patrick Miller, Paul Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1987) 354.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Blair, "An Appeal to Remembrance,"

which the fathers did not know, is remarkable in the Deuteronomic literature.

It may be argued that the phrase, "which your fathers had not known," should be understood as a sign the purpose of which was to organize chronological experience. In other words, the phrase referring to the fathers could be understood to bring to mind an idea similar to that accomplished by referring to "the good old days." There are at least two fundamental ways in which experience may be organized temporally. First, experience may be arranged as points upon a continuum. The similarities between points "a" and "b" outweigh the differences so that a continuum is established upon which the two temporal referents may be charted. For example, in a discussion with a colleague, I may refer to an experience which was in the "early days" of my teaching career. The "early days" can be charted at one point some distance from the implied "now" or "later days", both of which reside on the continuum of a "teaching career." Here, the differences between the "early days" and the "now" are understood within the context of a more fundamental similarity, that being a teaching career. The "early days" and the "now" or "later days" are various experiences of teaching which belong upon one continuum. This type of chronological organization is accomplished in the Biblical text by means of a variation of the formula X-כִּי, which, as demonstrated by Gershon Brin, is the typical notation used by Biblical writers.<sup>22</sup> This formula abounds in the Kings and Chronicles and is attested in the Deuteronomic corpus (19:17; 32:7). A similar effect is served by folk aetiologies which explain contemporary phenomena in terms of past events and use variations of the formula "to this day" (Josh 8:28-29; et. al.). If

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Interpretation 15 (1961) 43.

<sup>22</sup> Gershon Brin, "The Formula X-כִּי and X-וְ: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel," Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 93 (1981) 183-196.

this type of chronological construction is the intent of the phrase in Deuteronomy 8, "which your fathers did not know", then it is untypical in its formulation.

There is a second way in which experience can be organized temporally. Experience may be organized in oppositions. An experience can be either anticipated or recalled, the notable character of which is fundamentally different than the present. Here, the similarities between two points are understood within the context of a more profound distinction. To return to the example from education, this manner of organizing experience may be illustrated by the recall of an event which took place in "under-grad days." The continuum between the "under-grad days" and the "now" is disrupted by the implied graduation. The "under-grad days" are understood within the broader context of graduation which in turn serves as a boundary between two types of experience, "under-grad" and "post-grad." This type of experiential organization emphasizes the boundaries between types of experience and is dependant upon those boundaries for the fundamental categories of meaningful experience. Most generally, the boundaries signify a notable change in the mode of the knowing subject's being rather than a change in the object of knowledge. It is this second type of experiential organization which is constructed in Deuteronomy 8.

As was noted earlier, the verb יָדַע is used within the context of inter-generational references in Deuteronomy and elsewhere in the Biblical text (Deut 13:7; Jer 9:16; 19:24; et. al.). The verb can be used to indicate a continuum between generations (Deut 28:64; Ps 78:6) or it can be used to indicate a temporal divider in the organization of experience which separates generations. Four examples will suffice to illustrate the rather special function of the verb as a temporal divider in the Biblical literature.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Lexical descriptions of the verb יָדַע make clear the experiential aspects of the verb, but generally emphasizing the object of knowledge and not the

Exod 1:8 marks the beginning of the Egyptian oppression by the advent of a Pharaoh "who did not know Joseph." The Exodus writer could just as easily have written "in the days of..." and in so doing imply no experiential discontinuity before and after this Pharaoh's reign. Rather, this Pharaoh's lack of knowledge effectively ends a time of peaceful co-existence between the Israelites and their Egyptian neighbors and begins the period of oppression. The temporal continuum of the Hebrew experience is dramatically divided by "knowledge." Later, after a failed attempt on the part of Moses to effect the release of his compatriots, knowledge is again used to demarcate the temporal limits of categories of experience. In Exod 6:3, God reassures Moses of his intent to rescue the Israelites and in so doing reminds Moses of the Divine Name which is known by Moses but was not known by Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. The revelation of the Name constituted a boundary between the experience of the patriarches and the experience of Moses and his associates. Further, knowledge of the Name is presented as adequate evidence of God's intention to "take you for my people" and "be your God" in a way which was only promised to the patriarches (Exod 6:7). This function of the knowledge was frustrated only by the Israelites "broken spirits and their cruel bondage" that is, by their present experiential categories.

Two final examples of the temporal arranging served by the use of וְלֹא יָדָעוּ are found in the book of Judges. In Judg 2:10, the generation following Joshua is distinguished from Joshua's generation by the report that they "did not know the Lord or the work which he had done for Israel." The knowledge characteristic of the present generation marked their experience as qualitatively different then that of Joshua's

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experiential categories of the subject. Other references could be cited, such as Josh 24:31; Ezek 25:14.

generation. Joshua's generation served the Lord (Judg 2:7) while the next generation served the Baals (Judg 2:11). Here, knowledge is used to mark the boundary between two types of religious affiliation and, in the theology of the writer of Judges, between a period of the Lord's blessing and a period of His judgement. A very similar function is served by reference to knowledge in 3:2 of the same book. This verse states that one of the reasons why the Canaanites were left in the Promised Land was that the present Israelite generation might "know war." According to this verse, the experience of the ensuing generations included military conflict which was contrasted to that of the preceding generations. Once again "knowledge" stands as the boundary between temporal-organizational continuums of experience.

It is this disjunctive type of organization which is effected by the reference to the fathers in Deuteronomy 8. In verses 3 and 16, the verb יָדַע signifies the boundaries between two experiential continuums rather than two points upon one continuum. In Deuteronomy 8 the significant point is the boundary which makes the present knowledge different than that of the fathers. In verse three it is explicitly stated that manna, which was unknown, was designed to make the community know that "man does live by bread alone." Something happened to the community which distinguished the present relationship with God from that of the past generation. That something is illustrated by manna, miraculously supplied food, which was previously unknown. The continuum of experience begun with the manna is, according to verse 5, to continue and characterize the community's obedient walk with God so that blessing in the land is assured.

## CONCLUSION

Deuteronomy 8 is a highly stylized sermon designed to motivate the believing Israelite community to religious faithfulness. Part of that motivation is a presentation of the community's dependance upon

"everything which proceeds from the mouth of God." That dependency is attested to empiracally by reference to the manna, food miraculously provided by God for the community. That experience was unknown by the fathers and served as a boundary marking off their relationship with God from the more intimate experience of the present generation. Something new had happened in the communal life of Israel. The sermon portrays the community as poised, about to realize the inheritance of the Promised Land. The present generation has begun a new continuum by which to organize experience. Far from being an incidental allusion or simply a technigue designed to emphasize the remarkable, the description of manna as something "which the fathers did not know" is a pointed reminder that something new had happened between the community and God; something which was to have lasting effects.

T. Giles

The little incident recorded in Mark 14:51-52 has long been a puzzle to commentators. It seems to break the continuity between 50 and 53, and does not appear in the corresponding places in Matthew (26:56-57) and Luke (22:53-54). For these reasons Weiss (1903) thought the story must have been inserted by a later hand, so that the copies available to Matthew and Luke did not contain it. But if so it is difficult to account for the fact that the verses occur in all extant manuscripts and versions of the gospel; if they had been missing from some early copies, surely the Alexandrian editors would have excised them. In any case this hypothesis does not solve the difficulty: why should Mark or anyone else have inserted the story at all? There are five explanations to choose from.

(1) Loisy<sup>1</sup> adopted Keim's hypothesis that the story had been invented in the early church in order to provide a fulfilment of the prophecy in Amos 2:16; that "On that day the strong man shall flee naked". To this Brandt had objected that Mark does not tell the story as a fulfilment of prophecy, but Loisy correctly retorted that Mark often alludes to OT prophecies without making the allusion explicit. (Examples can be found not much further on in this gospel at 14:61; 15:24; 29:36 and 27-28, where the fulfilment of prophecy is made explicit only in the Byzantine manuscripts; Mark, unlike Matthew, was writing largely for non-Jewish readers who would not be interested in such allusions.) Others have thought that the incident was imagined with reference to the story of Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife (Gen 29:12).

Many commentators since then (including A.E.J. Rawlinson, Vincent Taylor, and F.F. Bruce in New Peake) have thought explanations of this type

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Loisy, Les Evangiles Synoptiques (1908) II.591.

improbable because the story reads like a genuine reminiscence. In any case it does not sound like a midrash designed to illustrate either of these OT passages: Gen 29:12; was not in point because no one at the time of Jesus' arrest was trying to flee from temptation; and if anyone was to fill the part of the "strong man" in Amos 2:16; it should have been Peter or another of the apostles, and he should have been wearing armour, not an expensive linen cloth.

(2) Much more popular has been the conjecture that the young man was Mark himself. This explanation is at least as old as Hahn<sup>2</sup>, who saw in this curious incident "the monogram of the painter in a dark corner of the picture". Among British commentators who have, with varying degrees of confidence, approved this suggestion have been A.B. Bruce, H.G. Wood, A. Plummer, A.E.J. Rawlinson, P. Carrington, C.H. Turner and A.M. Hunter. Others, however, including Vincent Taylor, F.F. Bruce, E. Schweizer, H.G. Moule, Dennis Nineham, Hugh Anderson and S. Johnston, have dismissed this explanation as a mere conjecture unsupported by any positive evidence.

Not only is there no positive support for this explanation (the fact that this incident is omitted in Matthew and Luke is not significant, for the authors of those gospels often pruned from Mark what they regarded as unessential surplusage); there are in fact weighty considerations that point against it. "More detail might be expected if Mark were speaking of himself" (Taylor); chapter 14 does not read like the account of an eye-witness (Schweizer); the awkwardness of the connection with verses 50 and 53 implies that Mark was dependent on a source for the incident inserted at this point (Nineham). According to Papias<sup>3</sup>, Mark had neither been a hearer of the Lord nor one of his

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<sup>2</sup> As quoted by A.B. Bruce in The Expositors's Greek Testament (1905).

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Eusebius, H.E., 3.39.

followers, and this is likely to have been a genuine tradition because it does not place Mark in a favourable light. It must also be questioned whether a first-century writer would have introduced himself anonymously into the account of Jesus's arrest; if he had been personally present, surely he would have made it clear that the account is based on first-hand evidence, in the manner of John 19:35; and 21:24.

(3) Some writers, like P.Schanz (1881), E.Schweizer,<sup>4</sup> F.J.Mally in The Jerome Bible and H. Fleddermann<sup>4</sup> have taken the view that the identity of the young man does not matter because the object of the story was simply to give a concrete example of the terror inspired by the "sauve qui peut" situation. The difficulty about this is that Mark had already made clear that every one of Jesus' followers had abandoned him and fled; it does not heighten the tragedy to add what happened to a minor character in the drama. Mark's actual words (which some copyists attempted to improve, as shown in surviving textual variants) were *Καὶ νεανίσκος τις συνεκολούθει αὐτῷ* "And moreover a certain young man was also following him". The story is told as if to make an additional point; if it were merely an illustration of the desertion of Jesus it would have been more appropriately introduced by *γὰρ* than by *καὶ*. The puzzle remains.

(4) Different from all the foregoing is the explanation attempted by Professor Morton Smith in his book<sup>5</sup> Clement of Alexandria and the Secret Gospel of Mark. Smith's theory is that the young man was wearing a ceremonial garment over his naked body because he had just been baptized by Jesus and instructed by him in the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. He bases this theory on the recent discovery of

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<sup>4</sup> In Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 (1979) pp.412-18.

<sup>5</sup> Morton Smith, Clement of Alexandria and the Secret Gospel of Mark (Harvard University Press, Boston, 1973) pp.176-177

part of a letter written quite possibly by Clement of Alexandria, containing the text of additional material following Mark 10:34 which the writer believed to be part of Mark's gospel withheld from general publication. This material describes the raising from the dead of a young man who afterwards spent a night with Jesus receiving from him instruction in the mystery of the Kingdom of God and "clothed with a linen garment over his naked body" (the Greek words are identical with those in Mark 14:51). Smith believes that the newly-found text was part of, or anterior to, Mark's original gospel and contains a reference to baptism administered at night with secret magical rites; if so, the story at 14:51-52, with its identical wording, could be another allusion to this practice. All this, however, remains in the realm of conjecture. There is nothing about baptism in the "secret gospel" itself, and the fragment contained in the recently-discovered letter reads more like a clumsy pastiche by someone trying to imitate Mark's style. It cannot be relied on as evidence that Jesus baptized at all, or as elucidating in any way the story in 14:51-52.

(5) There remains the explanation that the incident was narrated as a fulfilment of Amos 2:16; not however as a story invented for the purpose, but as an actual fact. This explanation has received little notice from commentators: it was rejected by Taylor and Cranfield but admitted as possible by Nineham and accepted by Hoskyns and Davey<sup>6</sup>. If this was why Mark included the story, we need not ask who the young man was or why he was wearing nothing but a σινδωνα on a cold spring night. Of these incidentals many explanations are possible, but the point is that the curious occurrence did happen, and its memory was handed down in the early church because it showed that the crucifixion was a "day of the Lord" such as Amos had foretold. In verse 49 Jesus is recorded as saying

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<sup>6</sup> On p. 89 of The Riddle of the New Testament, by Sir Edwynd Hoskyns and Noel Davey (1931).

that his arrest had to take place in order that the scriptures should be fulfilled. At 51 Mark is saying, in effect, "and here is an example from an otherwise trivial incident, which those who know the scriptures will recognise as a fulfilment of prophecy."

The allusion to Amos 2:16; may seem far-fetched to our way of thinking; but so do many other NT references to the OT. What relevance has the weeping in Ramah or the sorrows of Rachel (Jer 31:15) to Herod's massacre of the innocents (Matt 2:18)? What connection has the death of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:20) with the imprecations in Psalms 69:25 and 109:8? By NT times the Jews had come to find in their scriptures many references to the coming Messiah; now that Messiah had come, the Christians were able to take the process a stage further.

It may be objected that the LXX version of Amos 2:16; will not sustain an allusion to the young man of Mark 14:51 for it prophesies that "the naked man will pursue on that day" (ὁ γυμνὸς διώξεται ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ). The whole verse in LXX makes very poor sense, and that may be one reason why Mark did not quote it; but it is perfectly possible that the incident of the strong man fleeing naked was noticed at the time by Christians familiar with the Hebrew. The way is therefore clear for the adoption of this as the only likely interpretation of an otherwise puzzling passage.

J. M. Ross

BOOK REVIEWS

John Thompson, The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Karl Barth Princeton Theological Monograph Series 23, Pickwick Publications: Allison Park Pennsylvania 1991 £12-90.

The understanding to the Holy Spirit is one of the major concerns of contemporary theology. The questions raised by the continuing growth of charismatic groups propagating Sprit-centred forms of worship in all Christian denominations and by the increased ecumenical contacts with Eastern orthodoxy often reveal a comparative neglect of pneumatological reflection in many strands of western theology. Karl Barth's theology has received an ambivalent assessment in this connection. Interpreted by some as first and foremost a theology of the Holy Spirit, it is criticised by others for a one sided subordination of pneumatology in its christocentric emphasis.

Professor Thompson's new book offers a welcome reassessment of Barth's theological understanding of the Holy Spirit in the context of a comprehensive account of Barth's treatment of pneumatology in the Church Dogmatics. The chosen method of exposition leads the reader from the prolegomena of dogmatics through the main doctrines of Christian theology and provides in this way a thorough introduction to the whole structure of Barth's dogmatics. It also illustrates the main thesis of Thompson's interpretation of Barth's pneumatology; " It is integrated into and integral to the whole content of the Church Dogmatics but is never its primary thrust." (p8) As the argument proceeds it becomes increasingly clear that this integrative function is also a central concern of Barth's treatment of the Spirit which is intended to prevent both a marginalisation of the Spirit as well as a distorting centralisation, since this could detract from the christocentric character of Christian faith. The theological basis for this view is Barth's interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity as the summary expression of the distinctively Christian

understanding of God as it is grounded in the revelation in Christ. Professor Thompson gives a clear account of the implications for the understanding of the Spirit following from Barth's conception of the Trinity: his notion of the Spirit as the "common factor" in the being of God the Father and God the Son and between God and humanity. He demonstrates how Barth's insistence on retaining the *Filioque* is grounded in his thesis of the correspondence between God's economic activity and the immanent divine being. Since Barth's theology is both christocentric and consistently trinitarian, it is not possible, Thompson argues, to understand the central categories of Barth's theology eg his doctrine of election, exclusively in christological terms while ignoring the role of the Spirit. Their relationship is neatly summarized by Thompson in the formula "... what is ontologically real in Jesus Christ in his eternal election become noetically present in incarnation and reconciliation and gains entrance into humanity in time by the Holy Spirit." (p 35) The way in which this insight from the doctrine of election as the "sum of the gospel" illuminates the central doctrines of the Church Dogmatics is shown in the remaining chapters of the book.

There are two aspects which give this competent exposition of Barth's pneumatology a distinctive character. The first is its emphasis on the reformed perspective from which Barth's pneumatology is developed. This appears in the constant insistence on the proper distinction between divine and human work as it is radicalized by Barth's emphasis on the sovereignty of the Lordship of Christ in the Spirit which cannot be re-presented by the church or by any office in the church. The second characteristic is a consistent critique of all forms of subjectivist interpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit which construes the appropriation of the cross of Christ through the Spirit in the life of the believer in such a way that it amounts to a denial of the objective character of reconciliation in Christ. Throughout the book Professor Thompson assumes the role of an expositor and apologist of Barth's theology attempting to restore the balance of Barth's pneumatology against the one-sided

interpretation of others. This is especially true of the last chapter, a critique of P.J. Rosato's interpretation of Barth's pneumatology in The Spirit as Lord, which offers an excellent summary of crucial points of Barth's treatment of pneumatological themes. It is in this connection that the central critical question is raised: Is Barth's emphasis on the sole mediation of Christ's reconciling work by the Spirit so pronounced as to call the instrumental function of Scripture, Church and human witness into question which God may use to address humanity?

Theological debate on pneumatology has moved on since Barth and questions have come to the fore which point beyond Barth's achievements. Is the understanding of the trinitarian persons as "modes of being" sufficient to account for their personal particularity in the communal being of the triune God? Is the role of the Spirit in creation sufficiently explored by Barth, and is the eschatological direction of the work of the Spirit given enough weight in Barth's treatment? Has Barth shown satisfactorily in what way the work of the Spirit is not only consecutive upon but also constitutive for the work of the Son in the incarnation? Professor Thompson has reminded us with his book that there can be little real expectation of finding satisfactory answers to these questions if the challenge of Barth's contribution to the theology of the Holy Spirit is side-stepped.

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In the United Kingdom and Ireland this book may be purchased through Family Books Ltd., Unit 5 Lyndon Court, 32-38 Queen St., Belfast BT1 6EF, N. Ireland.

E.P. Sanders, Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah  
SCM, London, 1990, pp 404 £17.50

The book is made up of five studies, on the Synoptic Jesus and the Law, on whether the Pharisees had Oral Law, whether they ate Ordinary Food in Purity: Purity, Food and Offerings in the Greek-Speaking Diaspora and finally Jacob Neusner and the philosophy of

the Mishnah. Dr Sanders argues that "the special Pharisaic traditions did not have the same status as the written law, that the Pharisees did not eat ordinary food in priestly purity, and that in the Diaspora the Jews went their own way with regard to food, purity and donations to the temple, rather than basing their behaviour on Palestinian rules. Their food laws were their own, their purity practices were distinctive, and their gifts to the temple were determined by their reading of the scriptures in Greek." (vii)

The study on the Synoptic Jesus and the Law is extensive and thorough. Dr Sanders retains his position in "Jesus and Judaism" where he treats the disputes re sabbath, purity and food in the gospels as "probably inauthentic". In the introduction, he states that "for the purpose of this study, I shall for the most part work on the assumptions which I do not actually hold; that all the material which is attributed to Jesus in fact goes back to him, and that he was a Rabbi who studied the law and intended to stake out his own position on numerous aspects of it (1). Dr Sanders does not consider that the conflict with the Pharisees on the law was a major element in the hostility that brought about Jesus' death. Rather, he agrees with many Jewish scholars that such conflicts were inconsequential, of minor importance. He charges Eduard Schweizer of not knowing what the biblical purity laws are when Dr Schweizer declares that "There can be no doubt that Jesus, through his entire conduct, had little concern for the OT laws relating to purity." (2) He uses Dr Vermes' view that Jesus was a charismatic prophet or healer to suggest that, if this is so Jesus, would not have been interested in taking a stance on a series of legal questions.

In this first study we have a detailed discussion on the Sabbath, food, purity, offerings, tithes, temple tax, oaths and vows, blasphemy, worship in the home and synagogue, fasting, conflict over the law. The conclusion is extensive (90-96), suggesting that Jesus had minor differences on the Sabbath, that failure to wash one's hands "would not have been much of an issue". On the saying of Jesus in Mark 7.19 "He declared all foods clean", implying rejection of the OT

food laws, Dr Sanders declares, " If we make a historical judgement, we must conclude that Jesus said nothing thus ambiguously negative about the food laws." (91) Similarly, Dr Sanders rejects any claim that there is an antithesis where Jesus expresses himself "You have heard... but I say to you." (Matt 5.21-48) i.e. as if setting himself against the Jewish law. Rather what Jesus is doing here is an interpretation of the law in radical terms. If there is fierce opposition in the conflict stories of Mk 2.1-3,6, Dr Sanders declares they are "clearly" editorial (96).

On the question as to whether the Pharisees had an oral law, most scholars would agree that the Pharisees had traditions which they knew were non-biblical but regarded as equal in age and authority to the written law. (98) Dr Sanders follows Jacob Neusner who claimed that the Mishnah makes a distinction between the words of the scribes and those of torah in such a way as to "preclude" that the words of the scribes were torah (cf 114). Thus in his conclusion to this section, Sanders accepts as convincing ( among other findings) that "the words of the scribes are lower in importance than the words of the Bible (torah) and transgression of scribal rulings is not considered real transgression." (129)

Equally thorough treatment (131-242) with lengthy conclusion (242-254) is given to the study, "Did the Pharisees eat Ordinary Food in Purity"; and to "Purity Food and Offerings in the Diaspora", (to a lesser extent), with a short conclusion.

In the final study headed "Jacob Neusner and the Philosophy of the Mishnah". he charges Neusner (Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah) with jargon and endless repetition, and many passages of poor English among which he cites:

Consequently, if I could locate a saying within the known, established pattern of the logical unfolding of a problem, I was on solid ground in maintaining that a saying lacking a name in fact fits into the thought of a given stage in the unfolding of the logical exposition of a tractate's

problem (19)

"Neusner", he declares, "never frees himself from tautology." (310) Equally, Sanders attacks Neusner's hypothesis in his work : "The Mishnah exhaustively presents the metaphysical world view of a social group," declaring " the world view which Neusner attributes to the Mishnah can be found neither in it nor behind it." (331) It is questionable if such an attack on another scholar can have many precedents.

The work of Sanders, however is thorough and exhaustive and can scarcely be ignored by any scholar of early Judaism. His positions in a number of areas run contrary to the majority of scholars but the work will repay careful even if at times tedious study.

E.A. Russell

Lincoln, Andrew T., Ephesians (Word Biblical Commentary) Dallas Texas, Word Books, 1990. Pp xcvi + 494.

Schnackenburg, Rudolph, (E.T. by Helen Heron), The Epistle to the Ephesians Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1991. Pp 464. £24.95.

There have been few major commentaries in English in recent years on Ephesians; that of Bruce is hardly detailed enough, that of M. Barth, though detailed, is too verbose for easy use. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome two new volumes which fill a much needed gap. Both belong to a new but steadily developing series and each adorns its series. Rudolph Schnackenburg is one of the most experienced and best qualified of German exegetes, probably the doyen of Catholic Biblical scholars; his commentary appears in a series which is a joint venture by German speaking Protestant and Catholic exegetes. Andrew Lincoln, a much younger man, writes in an American Protestant series. Curiously at an earlier stage both believed Paul wrote Ephesians but a more detailed study has led them to regard the letter as post-Pauline and they agree in placing it in the last decade or two of the first century, basing their arguments on language, style and theological content, and on the relation of

the letter to Colossians. The recognition of this relationship is of great assistance when it comes to unravelling the thought of the letter.

Both commentators agree in many of the other introductory issues. Lincoln's introduction is much the more extensive and detailed. Schnackenburg restricts himself to those matters on which a position has to be stated before entering on exegesis. They again agree that Ephesians was not a letter addressed to a single congregation but written to a wider constituency, probably in Asia Minor. The epistolary form is only superficial, though not an extra added to an existing document. Both assume that the author was a Jewish Christian but they resist attempts to identify him any more closely, or to define precisely the situation which led him to write the letter. Of the two Lincoln pays more attention to rhetorical analysis, though in comparison with much that is written in this area today he is wisely restrained.

The difference between the commentaries appears when we turn to the actual exegesis of the individual paragraphs of the letter. Superficially they adopt a similar layout. The discussion of each paragraph is headed with a bibliography and a translation (in the case of Schnackenburg this was originally into German). Lincoln's bibliography is much the fuller and normally includes the literature listed in Schnackenburg and, as is natural, contains many more items written in English. Following the translation and bibliography Lincoln has a brief section on textual issues and the major questions of grammatical construction. Each then has a section covering much the same ground but entitled by Schnackenburg "Analysis" and "Form/Structure/Setting" by Lincoln, and these two titles summarise well what the sections deal with. Here the relation of Ephesians to Colossians is treated in detail and the possible use of portions of existing tradition is discussed. Both are cautious in regard to the latter, Lincoln being the more willing to see their use. At this point a seemingly superficial difference becomes important. Lincoln has not been permitted by his format (dictated by his publishers) to use footnotes. This results in his pages being cluttered up with brackets containing references

to and discussions of other scholars; this is not to disparage these discussions for they form one of the most valuable features of his book. Schnackenburg refers much less frequently to other scholars and when he does so it is in the footnotes; here also he places what he needs to say on grammatical questions. This use of footnotes make his commentary much the easier to read. These differences reappear in the comments on individual verses. In both cases the final section treating each paragraph is a kind of summary of the thought of the paragraph with an attempt to show its theological significance. This is often the most clearly written section in Lincoln and those not interested in the detailed references to the work of other commentators may well be advised to start with it and get a birds-eye view of the whole; in this section he also brings out the thought of the particular paragraph in relation to that of the letter as a whole. The format which Lincoln is forced to use means that he sometimes touches on the same point on more than one of his sections, but it must be said that he managed to overcome this inherent defect of the series better than some of the other volumes. Lincoln has a chapter on theology in his introduction and tends to treat it in more traditional and systematic fashion than Schnackenburg; the latter deals with it through brief essays arising out of the discussion of particular paragraphs. They agree in seeing Ephesians as ecclesiastical rather than christologically oriented.

All commentaries are written with a constituency in mind; Lincoln has had clearly in view the academic community including honours students and his book will be indispensable for those who want to make this approach. His reading has been vast and almost everything written this century is listed and discussed, a wonderful blessing for future commentators and PhD candidates. Yet unlike Schnackenburg who lists much less he seems to have read little or nothing in the Fathers, from the Reformation period or from the earlier part of the nineteenth century; in particular he rarely refers to the great triumvirate of English commentators on Ephesians; Eadie, Alford and Ellicott.

This leaves the impression that thinking about

Ephesians began in the twentieth century. His commentary is indispensable to all serious study yet if someone wishes to wrestle with the thought of the letter in the way a "scholar-preacher" would Schnackenburg will be found to be the more helpful. This does not mean that academics can neglect Schnackenburg; his judgements are those of one of the most mature of exegetes, and if he does not list as many articles as Lincoln we can be sure that he has applied his mind to all the relevant problems.

Ernest Best

The Epistle to the Hebrews. Its Background of Thought by L. D. Hurst (Society for New Testament Studies, Monography Series 65. Cambridge University Press, 1990), 209 + xiv.

Professor Hurst begins from the premise that "the interpretation of the Epistle [to the Hebrews] is in disarray because scholarly opinion vacillates from background to background as each new publication appears." He then proposes to examine the possible backgrounds against which the Epistle may have been written. He divides his study into two parts, non-Christian backgrounds and Christian backgrounds.

His first chapter deals with Philo, Alexandria and Platonism as possible backgrounds for the Epistle. After a brief summary of the work of previous scholars he deals in detail with Philo's role in Judaism, making the very sensible point that Philo may not have been a towering giant in Alexandrian Judaism, but simply the one whose work survived! He then carries out a careful linguistic analysis of the key phrases (not discussed by Williamson) such as ὑπόδειγμα and σκιά, ἀντίτυπος, εἰκὼν and πρᾶγμα, and finally ἀληθινός. His concluding section has a discussion of Apocalypticism, with an excellent discussion of the "True Tent" in Hebrews. His conclusion is that the attempt to postulate direct dependence of the author of the Epistle on Philo has failed but that "both writers ... probably go back independently to a common OT background".

His second chapter deals with Qumran and considers the following points of contact: angels, Messianic conceptions, Melchizedek and the use of the Old

Testament in Hebrews. His conclusion is similar to the conclusion to the first chapter .. many of the similarities between Hebrews and Qumran are due, not to dependence but to a common background. Similarly negative conclusions about the possible influence of Gnosticism, the Samaritans and Merkabah Mysticism are drawn in the third chapter.

This second part of the book deals with possible Christian backgrounds for the Epistle, and here the author comes to more positive conclusions. In chapter four he deals with Manson's thesis about the origins of the Epistle and comes to the conclusion that "the weight of the evidence considered thus indicates that, despite some defects in his case, Manson has directed scholarly attention in a helpful direction in the attempt to uncover one of the streams of thought which may underlie Hebrews." (p.106)

Chapter five contains a helpful discussion of the links between Hebrews and Paul and concludes that "Hebrews appears to relate to Paul in a way quite unlike Qumran .....there may be basis for claiming Pauline influence in the epistle without recourse to the literary solution. Taken in this qualified sense, then, the phrase 'deutero-Pauline' might be suitable for Hebrews" (p.124). In his final chapter, the author comes to a more negative conclusion concerning links with 1 Peter, suggesting that "no form of literary dependence of *Auctor* upon 1 Peter can possibly be sustained".

The value of this book lies in the detailed and careful analysis of the text, rather than in the originality of the conclusions. It is a cry for common sense and careful exegesis in an area where sometimes novelty and originality have carried the day at the expense of more painstaking and less spectacular research. It is a very clear and readable book and would make an excellent textbook for advanced undergraduate courses on Hebrews, though unfortunately the cost of such specialized books as the Society for New Testament Monograph Series would preclude its inclusion in most undergraduate book lists.

J. C. McCullough